

What is Dyslexia and what do we know about it?

Charleston County School District recognizes the [International Dyslexia Association](#)'s definition of Dyslexia: *"Dyslexia is a specific learning disability that is neurobiological in origin. It is characterized by difficulties with accurate and/or fluent word recognition and by poor spelling and decoding abilities. These difficulties typically result from a deficit in the phonological component of language that is often unexpected in relation to other cognitive abilities and the provision of effective classroom instruction. Secondary consequences may include problems in reading comprehension and reduced reading experience that can impede growth of vocabulary and background knowledge."* Adopted by the IDA Board of Directors, Nov. 12, 2002

How do we screen for Dyslexia?

Universal screenings are critically important to identify potential learning problems early. Charleston County School District utilizes multiple assessments to provide information on potential indicators such as phonological and phonemic awareness, sound symbol recognition, alphabetic knowledge, decoding and encoding skills, and rapid naming skills, which are markers for dyslexia.

Evidence Based Instruction and Intervention

Charleston County School District utilizes a [Multi-Tiered System of Support \(MTSS\) framework](#) to support the needs of all students. The MTSS framework for literacy begins with core instruction that is strong in foundations of literacy and differentiated to meet the needs of all types of learners.

Literacy teams at every school analyze screening data and identify interventions matched to student need. For students with deficits in foundational reading skills, interventionists use curriculum materials with systematic, explicit instruction of the foundations of reading and writing using multi-sensory strategies as appropriate. The best approach to reading instruction is one that incorporates explicit instruction in phonemic awareness, systematic phonics instruction, methods to improve fluency, and ways to enhance comprehension.

Concept	Description
Phonological Awareness	Knowing that spoken words are made up of smaller parts called phonemes. Teaching phonemic awareness gives children a basic foundation that helps them learn to read and spell.
Phonics Instruction	Phonics teaches students about the relationship between phonemes and printed letters and explains how to use this knowledge to read and spell.
Fluency	Fluency means being able to read quickly, knowing what the words are and what they mean, and properly expressing certain words - putting the right feeling, emotion, or emphasis on the right word or phrase. Teaching fluency includes guided oral reading, in which students read out loud to someone who corrects their mistakes and provides them with feedback, and independent silent reading where students read silently to themselves.
Comprehension: Vocabulary instruction	Teaches students how to recognize words and understand them.
Comprehension: Text comprehension instruction	Teaches specific plans or strategies students can use to help them understand what they are reading.

Progress within intervention is monitored frequently. These collaborative problem solving teams utilize progress monitoring data to inform changes in instruction and intervention as needed.

Students not currently enrolled in public school

Parents of school-age children (ages 5 to 21) not enrolled in a public school program who suspect that their student has Dyslexia have access to free academic screenings through the [CCSD Child Find](#) process.

Comprehensive Evaluations

Students are considered for further diagnostic testing any time a team member suspects a disability. In accordance with recommendations by the International Dyslexia Association, diagnostic testing is tailored to address the specific areas of dyslexia, which include but are not limited to:

- Phonological Awareness – an individual’s awareness of and access to the sound structure of his/her oral language
- Phonological or Language-Based Memory – ability to recall sounds, syllables, words
- Rapid Automatic Naming – speed of naming objects, colors, digits, or letters
- Receptive Vocabulary – understanding of words heard
- Phonics Skills – understanding of the symbol (letter) to the sound(s) relationship, either individually or in combination with other letters
- Decoding – ability to use symbol-sound associations to identify (read – pronounce) both real and nonsense words
- Oral Reading Fluency – ability to read words, sentences and paragraphs accurately, at a story-telling pace in order to facilitate and support comprehension
- Writing at the sentence and paragraph level

All available data are then reviewed and, in accordance to the South Carolina Department of Education Standards for Evaluation and Eligibility Determination (SEED) requirements, eligibility for special education services is determined by a multidisciplinary team.

Specially Designed Instruction

When a student is determined eligible Under IDEA for special education services, a team utilizes data from various assessment sources to develop a specially designed instructional plan for each student. This information becomes the document that is called an Individualized Education Program (IEP). [34 CFR 300.39](#)

- "Special education" means **specially designed instruction** , provided at no cost to the parents, that is intended to meet the unique needs of a child with a disability, including: 1) instruction conducted in the classroom, in the home, in hospitals and institutions, and in other settings; and 2) instruction in physical education. 34 CFR 300.39 (a)(1).
- The term includes: 1) speech-language pathology services, or any other related service, if the service is considered special education rather than a related service under state standards; 2) travel training; and 3) vocational education.34 CFR 300.39 (a)(2).
- **Specially designed instruction** means adapting, as appropriate to the needs of an eligible child, the content, methodology, or delivery of instruction -- 1) to address the child's unique needs resulting from the disability; and 2) ensuring the child's access to the general curriculum so that the child can meet the educational standards that apply to all children within the jurisdiction of the public agency. 34 CFR 300.39 (b)(3).

Resources

- International Dyslexia Association
- Understood.org

